

Experience in care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic

Analysis of survey responses from care home residents, their friends and family and care home staff in the London Borough of Sutton during the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic.



July 2021

Contents

Contents	1
National background	2
Local care home provision.....	2
Purpose.....	2
Methodology	3
Care Home Residents’ Experiences	4
Care Home Residents’ Experience - Learning Disability	15
Family and Friends’ Experience	17
Staff Experience	29
Key Findings - Residents	39
Key Findings - Learning Disability Residents.....	39
Key Findings - Friends and Family	39
Key Findings - Staff.....	40
Recommendations	41
Thank you.....	41
Appendix A - Easy Read Report	42

National background

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic so far, care homes have been on the front line in the fight to protect people from contracting the virus. Early evidence indicated that older people were significantly more likely to experience severe symptoms, hospitalisation and death as a result of being infected. This has been scientifically and statistically proven as further evidence was collected as the pandemic spread.

The UK Government realised that care homes needed resources and support to minimise the chances of residents becoming infected. Local government was allocated additional funding to be given to care homes to purchase PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and other resources (including additional staffing or compensating staff who worked in more than one home for lost income).

Residents of care homes for older people were identified as the highest priority group for receiving the vaccine alongside staff employed in these homes. Vaccination started in December with a target to vaccinate all residents by 15th February.

Local care home provision

There are 77 care homes in the London Borough of Sutton with a total of 1346 beds (June 2021). A mixture of nursing and residential care. There are 28 care homes that care for older people (986 beds), 43 homes that care for people with a learning disability (293 beds) and 7 homes caring for people with mental health issues (67 beds).

In terms of CQC ratings, 3 are rated as 'Outstanding', 63 are rated as 'Good', 9 are rated 'Required Improvement', 1 is 'Inadequate' and the remaining 2 have not been inspected.

The NHS in Sutton took the decision to prioritise all residents of care homes in the Borough (irrespective of age) and started vaccinating residents of homes for people with a learning disability before it was Government policy to do so.

Purpose

Healthwatch Sutton had just started a series of visits to care homes for older people in the Borough before the pandemic. A pilot visit (with a team of Healthwatch volunteers) had been carried out in late 2019 and a report produced using feedback from residents, their friends and family and staff. It was intended that a further 10 care homes would be carried out in the following months. Preliminary meetings had been held with some care home managers.

The COVID-19 outbreak put an immediate end to these plans and Healthwatch Sutton continued to receive feedback from some residents concerning issues that they had experienced. For example, some families were finding it difficult to visit their loved ones.

Healthwatch Sutton kept in contact with the care home commissioning team at Sutton Council. We agreed that it would be beneficial for commissioners, care home management and staff, the NHS and other organisations (including the community sector) to capture the experience of residents, their friends and family, and the staff during the pandemic. Findings from the project could be used to learn lessons that could help future planning

and have a greater understanding of the impact of this kind of crisis on the whole care home sector.

Sutton Council agreed to commission Healthwatch Sutton to carry out this work and produce a report from the data collected.

Methodology

The restrictions imposed on care homes and the general population severely restricted the methods that could be used to collect the experiences of people in care homes (and their family/friends). Healthwatch Sutton had to identify a method of collection that would have the least impact on safety of residents, their family/friends and staff. Other local Healthwatch organisations had started working on similar projects. Healthwatch Croydon and Healthwatch Kingston shared the tools that they were using. These were based around a set of surveys for residents, their families and staff.

Healthwatch Sutton took these tools to a care home managers' meeting to discuss how the project could be developed. Originally, it had been decided that care home staff would not take part, however care home managers felt that their views were important so a survey for staff was included. Care home managers of care homes for people with learning disabilities identified issues around collecting views for their residents. The manager at Fountain Care/Loving Care helped Healthwatch Sutton develop an EasyRead version of the survey to capture their views.

We acknowledge that some residents of care homes for older people would not have the mental capacity to be able to complete the survey. As such it was intended that the 'Friends and Family' survey would pick up some feedback on behalf of these residents.

Four surveys were developed based on the examples used by other local Healthwatch organisations:

- Residents
- Residents (Learning disability)
- Friends and Family
- Staff

Printable and online versions of all surveys (with the exception of online for the EasyRead version) were created. A covering letter to care home managers was put together and sent with packs of the different surveys and freepost returns envelopes to all care homes in the Borough. This was followed up by an email with all associated papers to all care homes.

We created posters for residents, friends and family and staff to be put up in appropriate places in care homes (e.g. in staff areas for staff). These included a QR code that could be scanned using a phone or tablet so that people could complete the survey online.

All managers of care homes for older people were contacted by phone 3-4 weeks after the project was launched to see if any help was needed and to encourage participation.

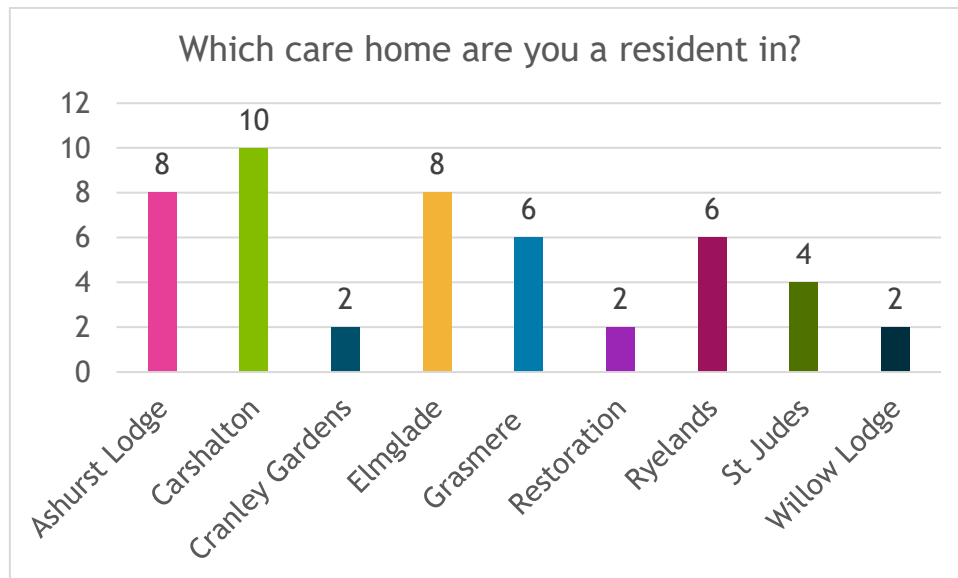
In total, 248 surveys were collected between 9 March and 25 May 2021.

Residents	48
Residents (Learning Disability)	26
Friends and Family	59
Staff	115

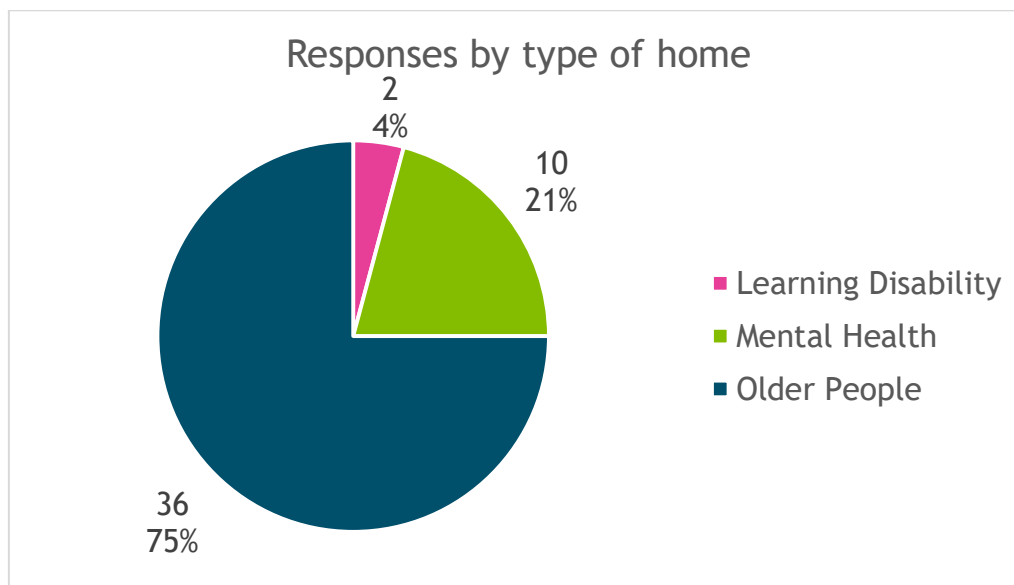
Care Home Residents' Experiences

In total, we received **48** responses.

Question 1



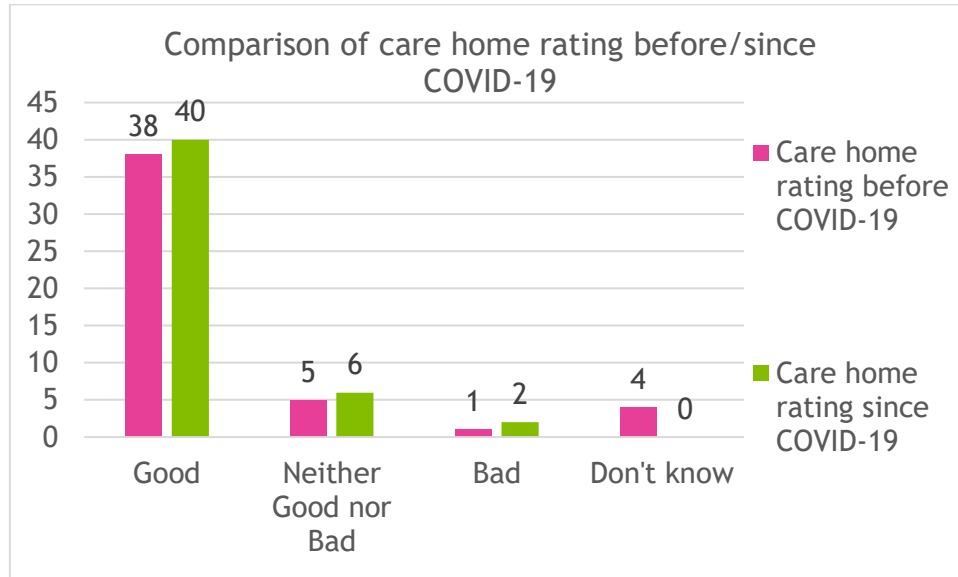
Residents from **9** different care homes took part.



Three quarters were from homes providing care to older people with the remainder from mental health and learning disability homes.

Questions 2 & 3

Residents were asked to rate their experience before and since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Residents' views concerning their experience of living in the care home changed very little.



How would you describe your care home experience since the COVID-19 pandemic (after March 2020)? Please tell us more why you gave this rating.

"I am happy. I settled down well. Staff supported me with my care plan and provided me with lots of information in regards to COVID-19."

"It is always good."

"Free food. Reasonable facilities."

"Staff are good."

"I do not enjoy."

"It's a prison."

"Fantastic carers who look after us so well. They go out of their way to keep us safe which they have."

"I was looked after. Good caring." "I feel safe here. Staff looked after me well."

"Everybody here is so friendly and caring. That did not change because of the pandemic."

"I like this place and I was lucky to find it."

"Good care and help with medical problems. Poor quality food at times."

"I'm getting better every time I'm with my family."

"Can't go out. See family occasional visits. Stay indoors."

“Cannot use dining area with others.”

“We enjoy the activity focus. Visitors occasionally.”

Question 4



Please tell us about any changes that have affected your residential experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?

“Yes, I got COVID-19 positive and was isolated. They look after me.”

“The lockdown stopped me from doing my normal lifestyle tasks. I was not able to go to the local shops.”

“Staff use masks. Cannot have visitors. They say I cannot go out. Only stay in the lounge or garden. Limited visiting.”

“Obviously like everywhere. No visitors or family except some exceptional circumstances. It has been a very difficult time for us all.”

“Not being able to see my family has not helped me at all. I have been extremely emotional at times.”

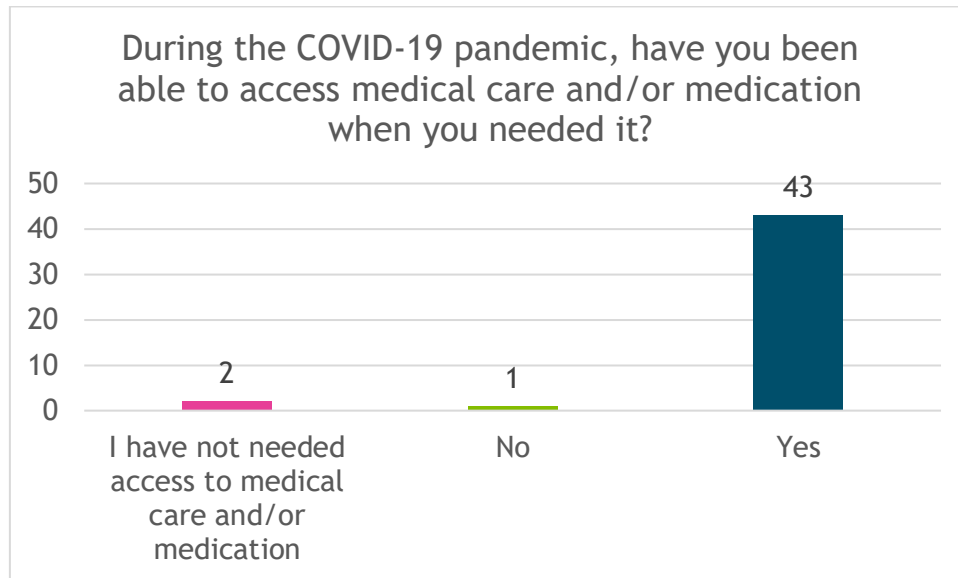
“No. I always stay in my room. It’s the same for me.”

“I couldn’t see my friends and family. I couldn’t go out with my friends. They are my life.”

“I came to **** during the pandemic and not being able to see family has been really hard.”

“It has not changed anything for me. Except tests (swab of nose and jabs).”

Question 5



Of those that needed access to medical care and/or medication, **98%** were able to access it.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, have you been able to access medical care and/or medication when you needed it? Please tell us more.

“Changes to the routine.”

“My medication is sent there.”

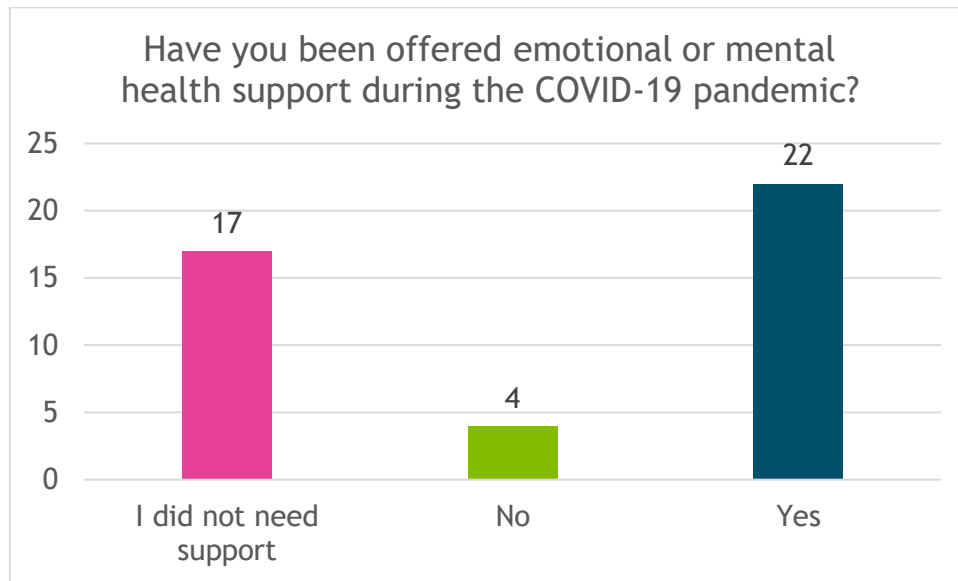
“The pandemic has not affected the medical care that I receive.”

“I had a UTI and was able to get antibiotics. Also had a problem with my legs (Odema) which was treated and dressed.”

“Staff help me talk to the doctor. They know what to do.”

“Was able to attend all appointments.”

Question 6



Nearly 40% of respondents didn't need support for their emotional or mental health. For those that did, **85%** were offered support.

Question 7



15% of residents have needed to self-isolate

Question 8



Please tell us the experience of how you were supported by the home.

Only those that responded 'Yes' to Question 7 responded to this question.

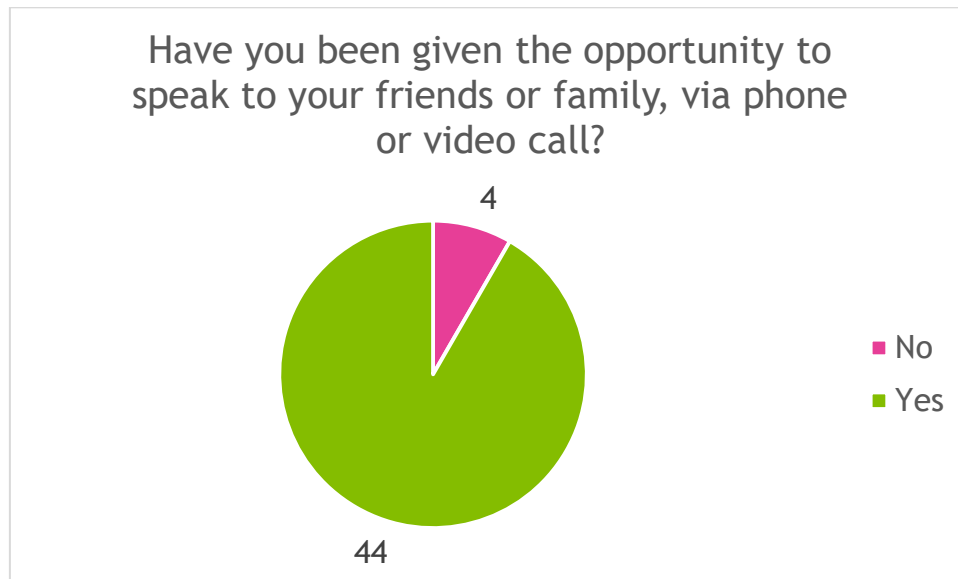
“Standard of care the same. Very good.”

“I was isolated in my room. They brought me food and helped me. They are very good.”

“Supported in all areas.”

“Very good experience.”

Question 9



8% of residents stated they had not been give the opportunity to speak to friends or family via phone or video call.



Have you been given the opportunity to speak to your friends or family, via phone or video call? Please tell us more.

“I have my own phone and phone my friend when I want to. She does my shopping too.”

“Being able to FaceTime my family has definitely helped. The carers are all good at assisting me.”

“I choose not to for various reasons.”

“No family.”

“I have a mobile telephone (audio) which I use every day to talk to my family. I am also able to use a tablet belonging to ***** care home to speak to my family by video link.”

“I see my family in video call, but I want to see them face to face.”

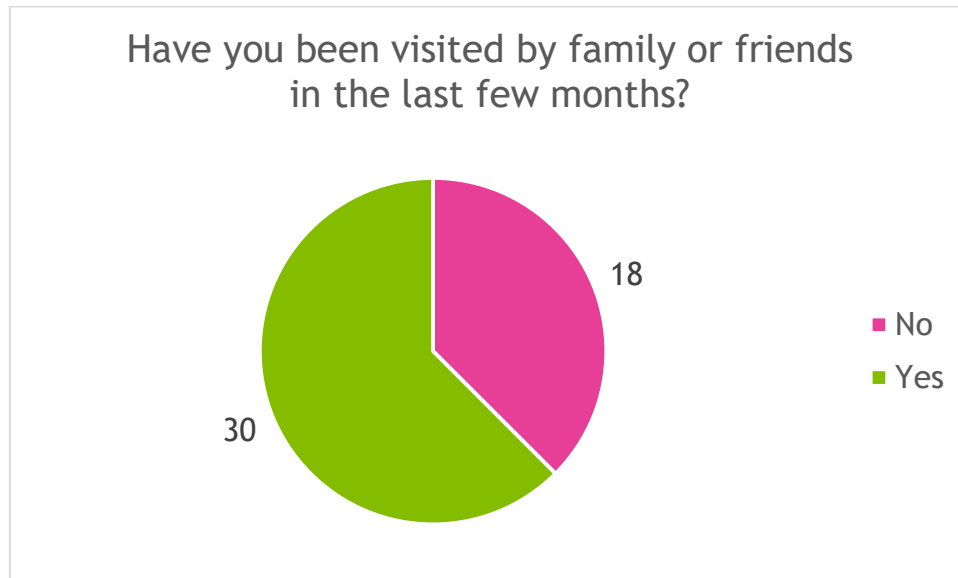
“I talked to my sister and neighbour through phone. I want to see her.”

“Nobody called me. I got only sister.”

“Not ideal due to my dementia as I cannot grasp the concept. However, my family were happy to see me regularly, albeit ‘virtually.’”

“Telephone and Skype until visits behind a screen was introduced.”

Question 10



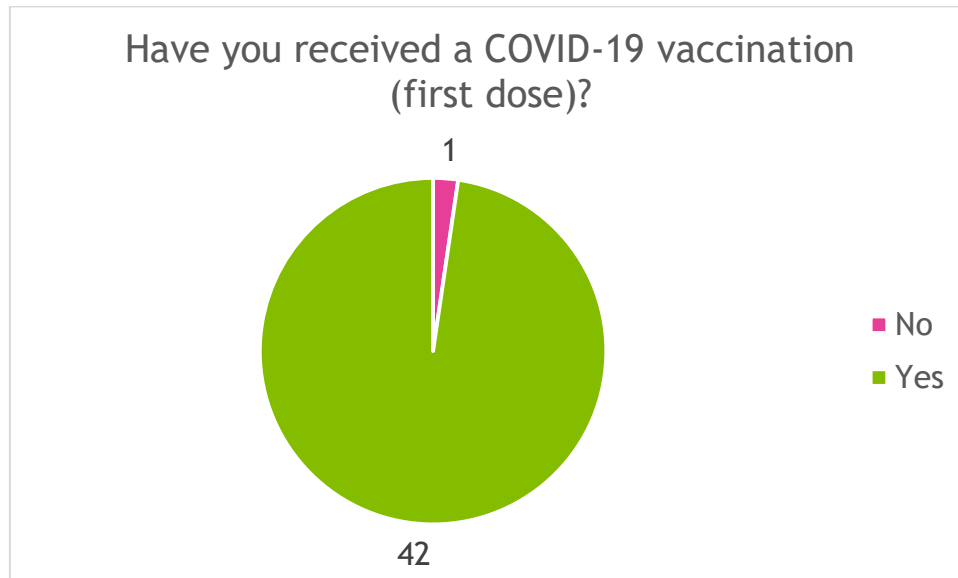
Well over a third of respondents had not been visited by family or friends in the last few months.

Question 11



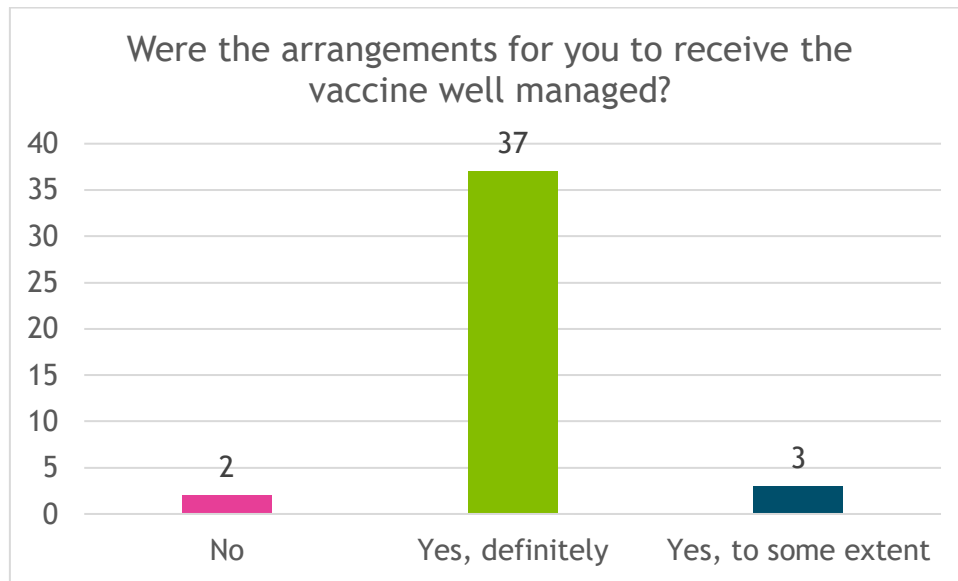
100% of respondents who knew whether visitors were given PPE agreed that it had been supplied.

Question 12



Only 1 respondent had not received a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination.

Question 13



5% of respondents felt the arrangements for the vaccine were not well managed.



*Were the arrangements for you to receive the vaccine well managed?
Please tell us more.*

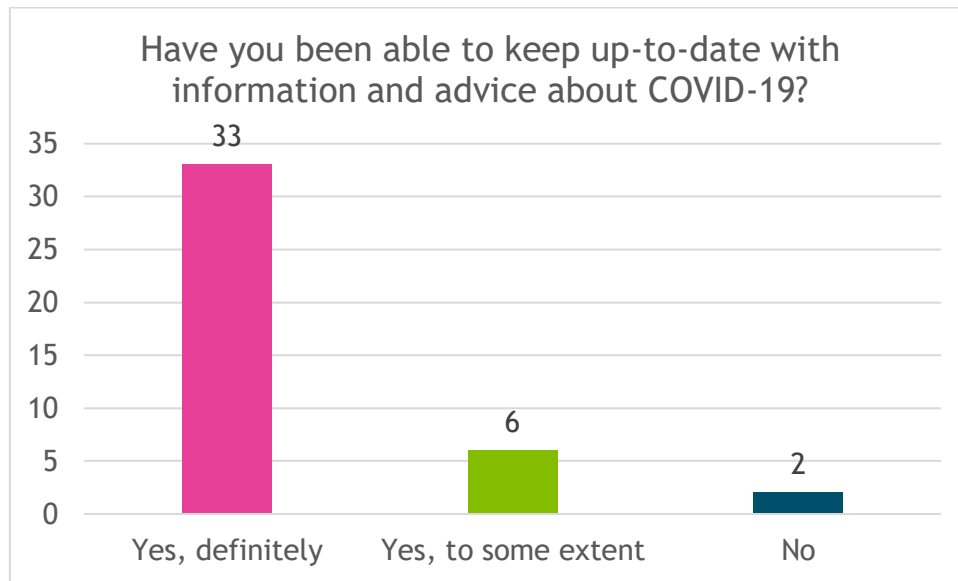
“Yes. Nurse came to home and gave vaccine to me.”

“Yes. The nurse came to home. I had first and second vaccine.”

“Yes, definitely. A very good video call was arranged with family to explain the procedure, downsides, potential side effects etc.”

“Yes, definitely. Unable to process information due to my dementia.”

Question 14



5% of respondents felt that they have not been able to keep up-to-date with information and advice about COVID-19.

Question 15



Do you have any comments about being a resident of this care home during the COVID-19 pandemic?

“I’m very comfortable.”

“I want to go out.”

“I’m very lucky to still have all senses. I’m very thankful.”

“All the staff have been extremely cautious throughout and care levels have remained high.”

“Gaming consoles i.e. Xbox or PlayStation 4.”

“I want to see my family.”

“Like everyone here we need more family intervention and look forward to it.”

“Management and staff at **** care home could not be better. We are like a family.”

“More physio activities.”

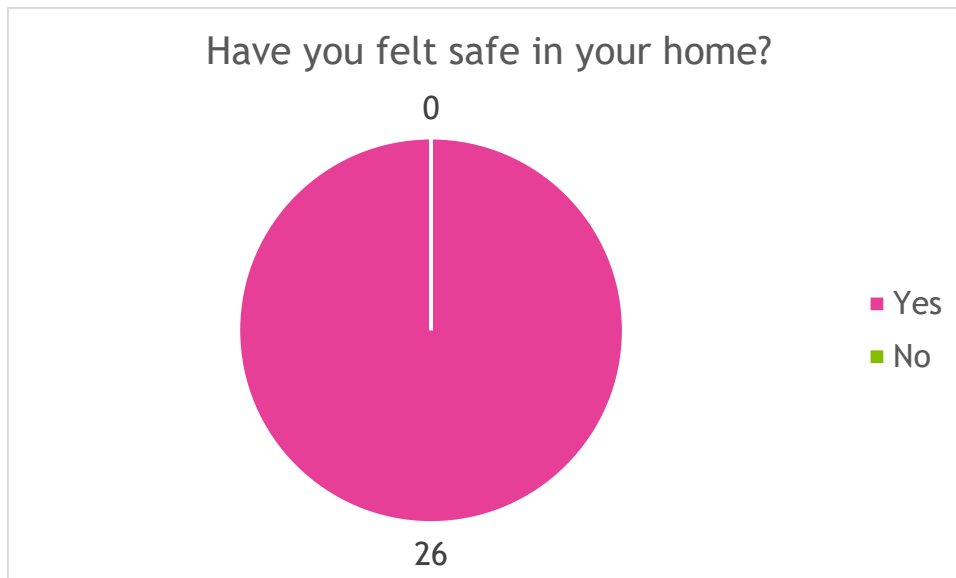
“The manager and staff are so good at looking after you.”

“They keep a very watchful eye on my health and arrange any necessary treatment.”

Care Home Residents' Experience - Learning Disability

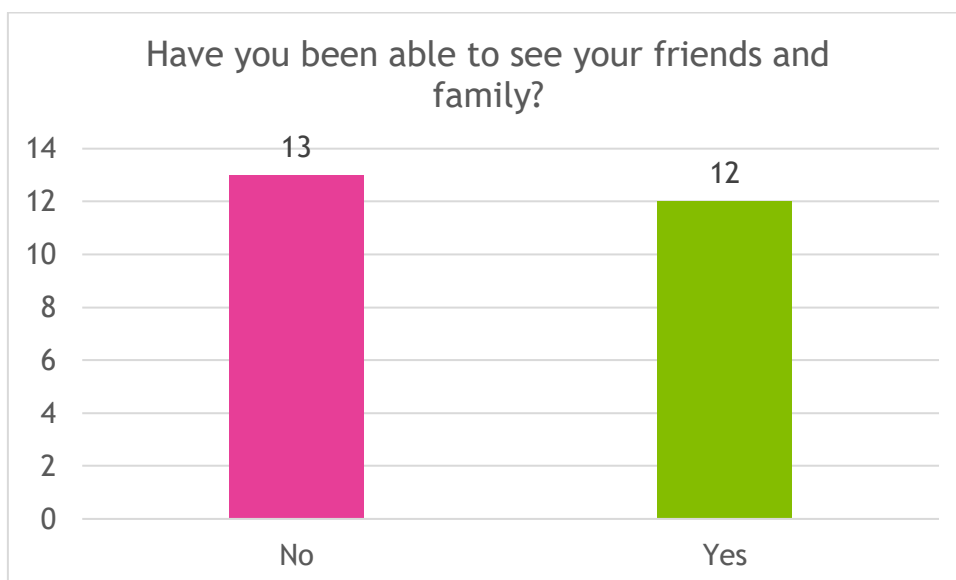
In total, we received 26 responses.

Question 1



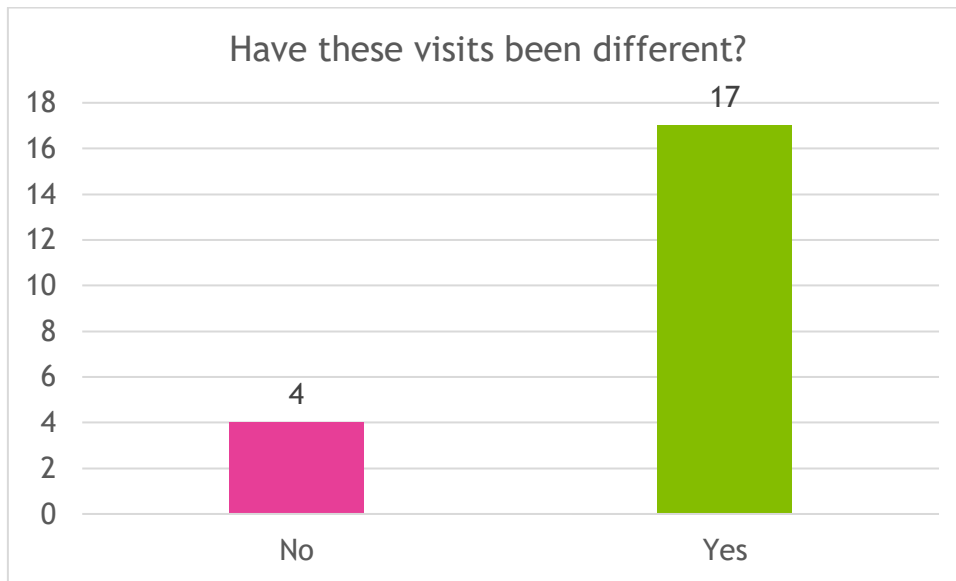
All respondents felt safe in their home.

Question 2



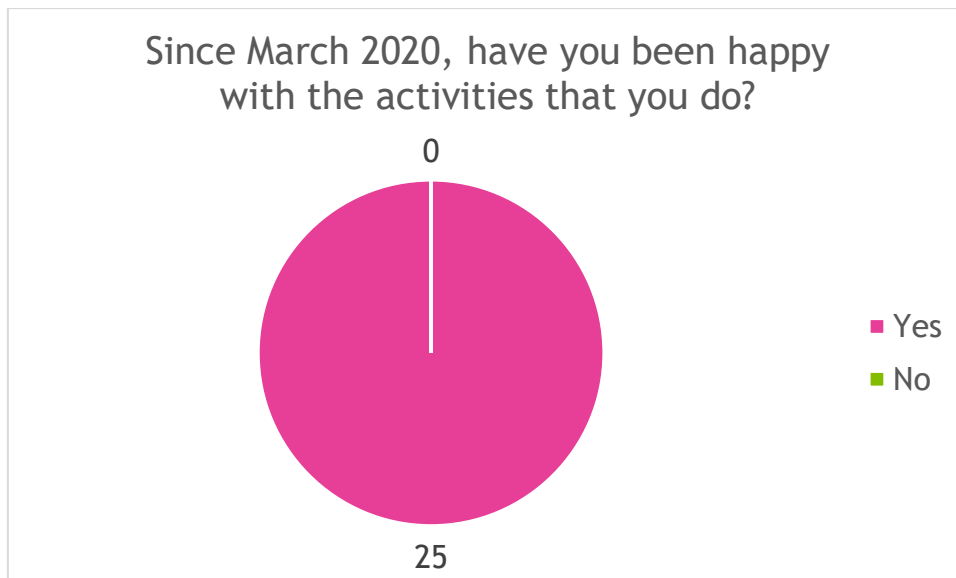
Over half of the respondents had not been able to see friends and family.

Question 3



Over three quarters of respondents said visits had been different.

Question 4

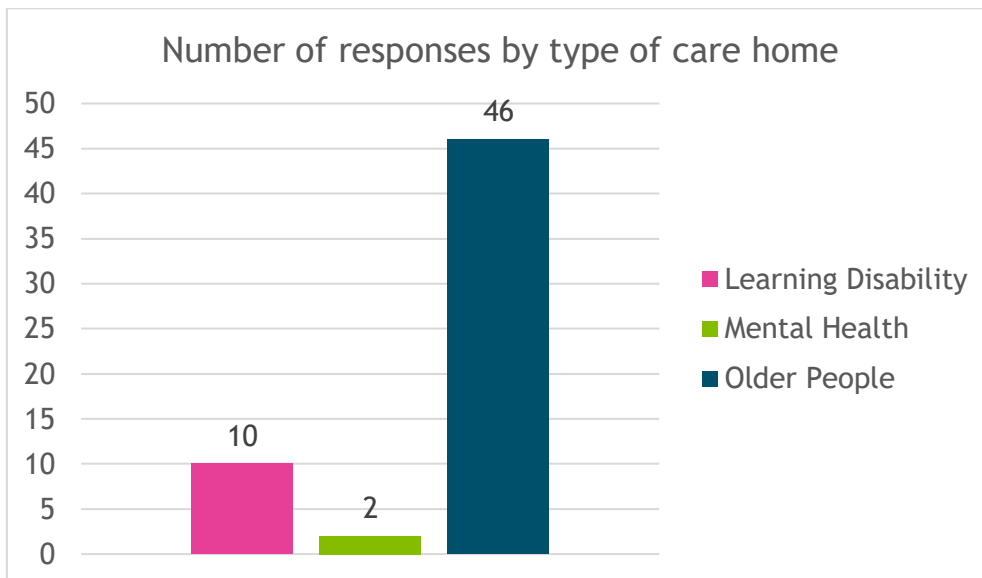
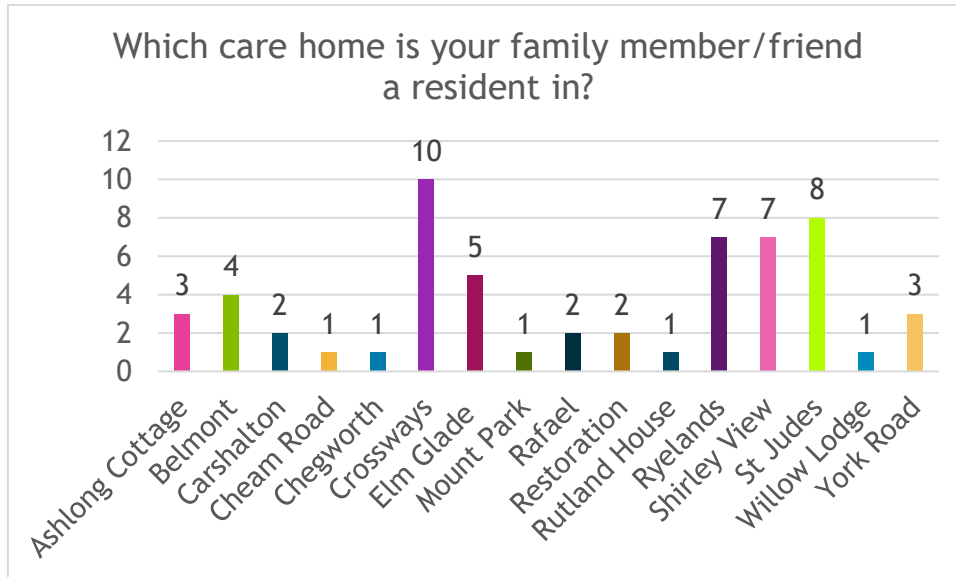


All respondents have been happy with the activities they do.

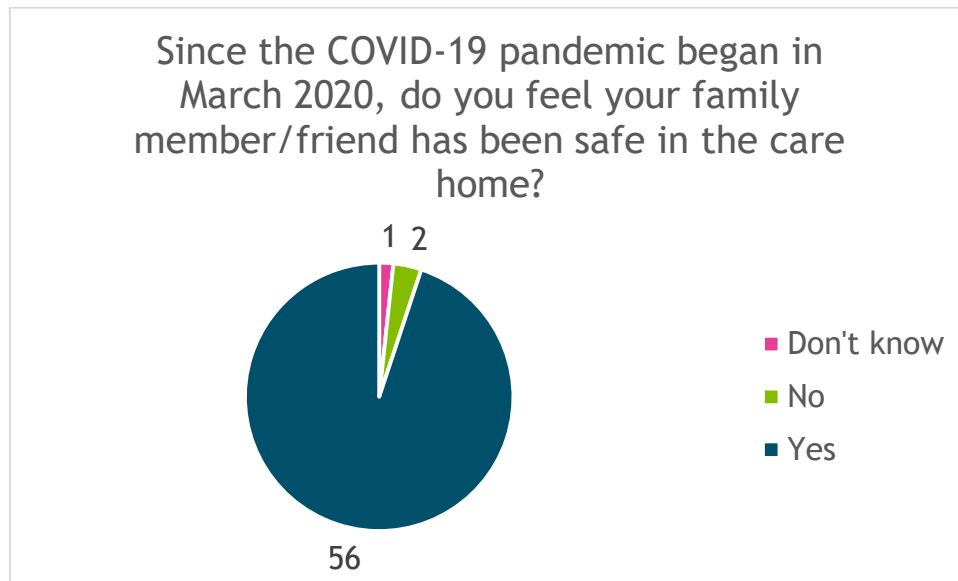
Family and Friends' Experience

In total, we received **59** responses.

Question 1



Question 2



97% (excluding 'Don't know') felt their family member/friend has been safe



Since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020, do you feel your family member/friend has been safe in their care home? Please tell us why.

“The staff go above and beyond! And my mum sees them as an extension to her own family.”

“Great care at all times. All procedures for safety in place and followed. Good communication with all staff so we all know what is happening in these difficult days.”

“Confident the staff and management have taken every care to follow guidelines and look after residents.”

“The staff are fantastic. They are on top of everything. Everyone has been kept safe, happy and well at the care home.”

“As I understand it they have stopped all relatives from entering the home unless the occupant is dying and then they provide appropriate Covid protective wear.”

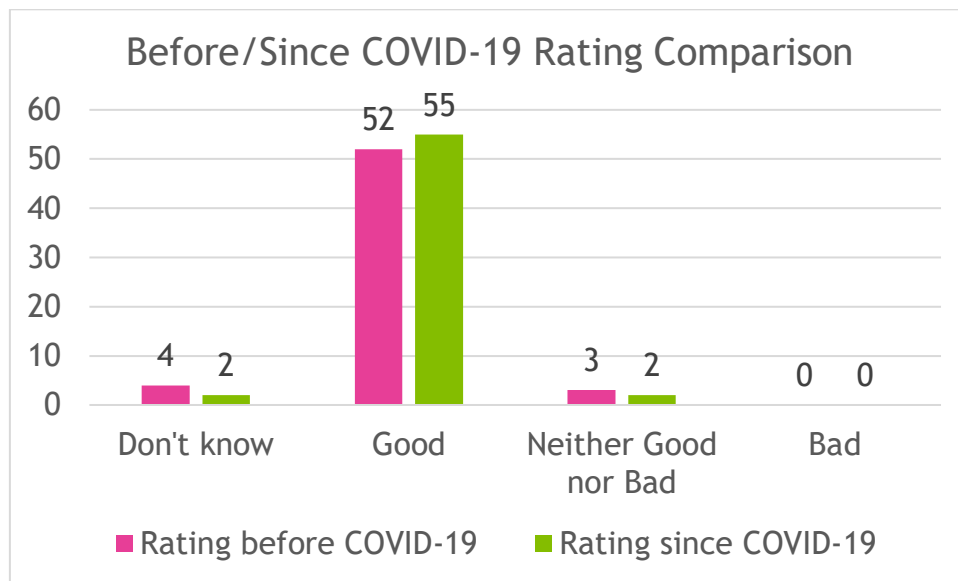
“The staff are very caring and took early precautions to stop family visits in order to protect residents.”

“Staff take enormous precautions re COVID, medical care and keep us informed regularly. My mother is infinitely safer than she would have been in her old own home!”

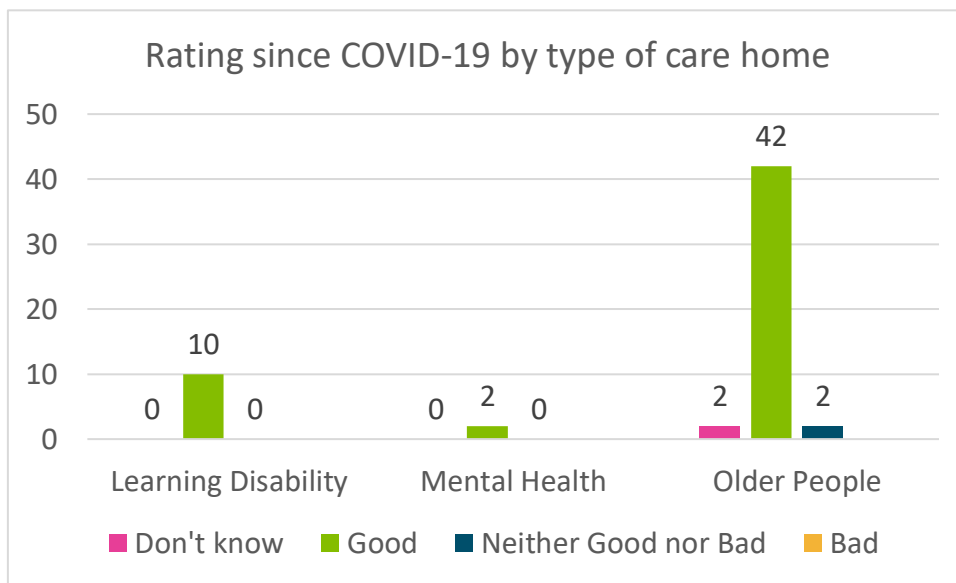
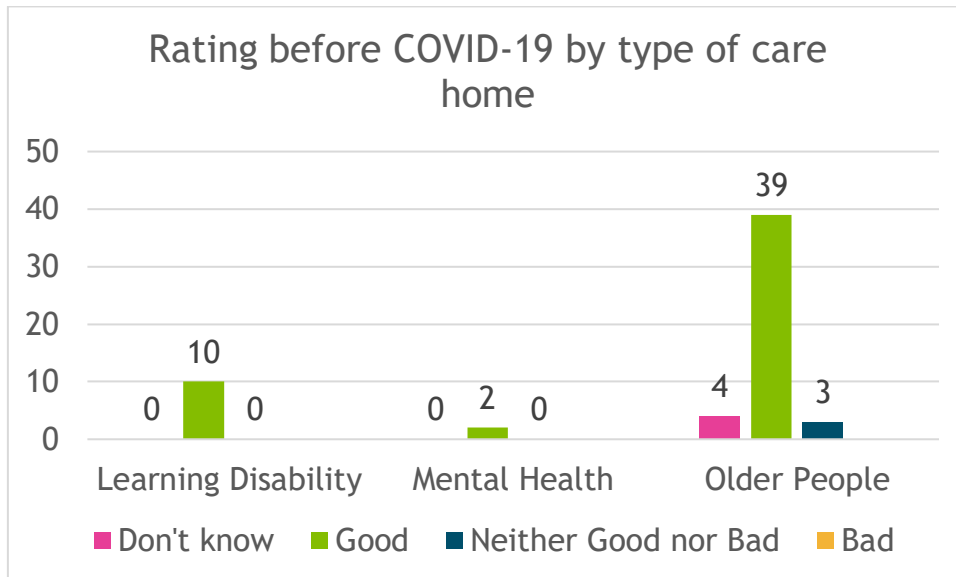
“They have worked hard to protect residents - though at one point a lot of staff contracted coronavirus and that was a worrying time.”

“They have done the best they can although at the beginning it was very worrying due to the lack of PPE and testing.”

Questions 3 & 4



There was very little change between before and since COVID-19 ratings for the care homes.



There was a small shift to a more positive rating in care homes for older people since COVID-19.



How would you rate the care home for your family member/friend since the COVID-19 pandemic (after March 2020)? Please tell us more about why you gave this rating.

“I would give it a higher rating if I could.”

“Because I’ve always been impressed by the strength of care ethic at ***.”**

“I can’t thank the staff enough - they are all wonderful. My daughter is extremely well, happy and safe.”

“Good is really not the right word to describe staff. EXCELLENT.”

“As we have not been inside the premises since the start of the pandemic unable to answer this question.”

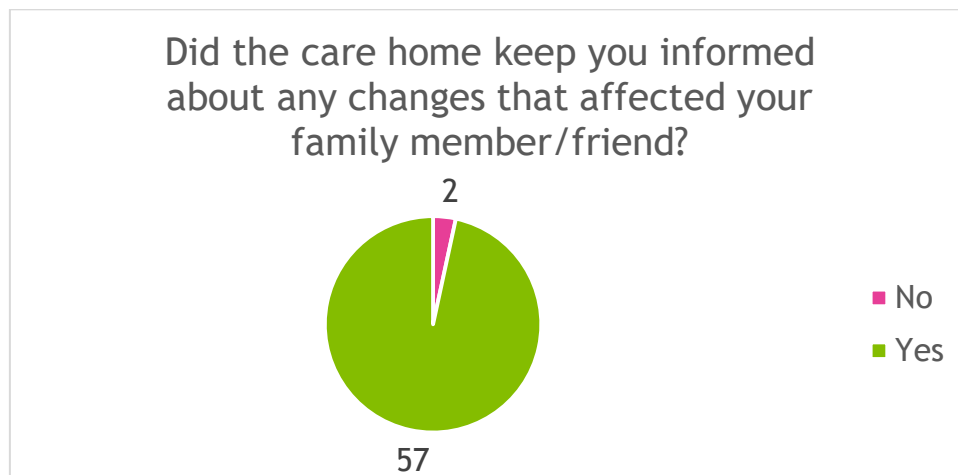
“Difficult to say as our family member had not moved in until May 2020. From a distance the care home has been fine, although would be easier to say if we’d been allowed into the home.”

“Before COVID I was able to visit often. While I am visiting I have heard ** swear and be rude but she was still treated with respect. I think ***** is lucky to be in such a caring home.”**

“They have kept families informed (though at times the communications could have been clearer) and they have been as accessible as possible with allowing visits - and have facilitated phone calls and Skype when visiting was not possible. They have also continued with a range of stimulating activities for residents despite the lockdowns and restrictions.”

“I think they are average but do not go beyond to give extra support during this time when we haven’t been able to visit.”

Question 5



The vast majority (97%) of friends and family were kept informed about changes that affected their friend or family member.



Did the care home keep you informed about any changes that affected your family member/friend? Please tell us more.

“The manager sends out regular bulletins by email or calls us personally if there is a problem/reason to discuss privately.”

“Informed when residents had to be quarantined - 1st wave. Kept up to date with progress of their mental health.”

“They would tell me why I can’t go out.”

“Not readily enough. Not frequent.”

“They have kept in contact with us every way possible. Nothing was too much for them.”

“The Home send monthly newsletters with updates of life in the home and regularly email us with information.”

“Was have also had a good rapport with the staff. I have had calls asking for permission to give mum flu jab and also the Covid vaccine. I am advised if Doctor might need to be called. Also advised of any falls mum has had and any injuries sustained. I am also asked if I would like to attend any meetings that are held in reference to mum.”

“Immediately called to share updates or changes that were put in place.”

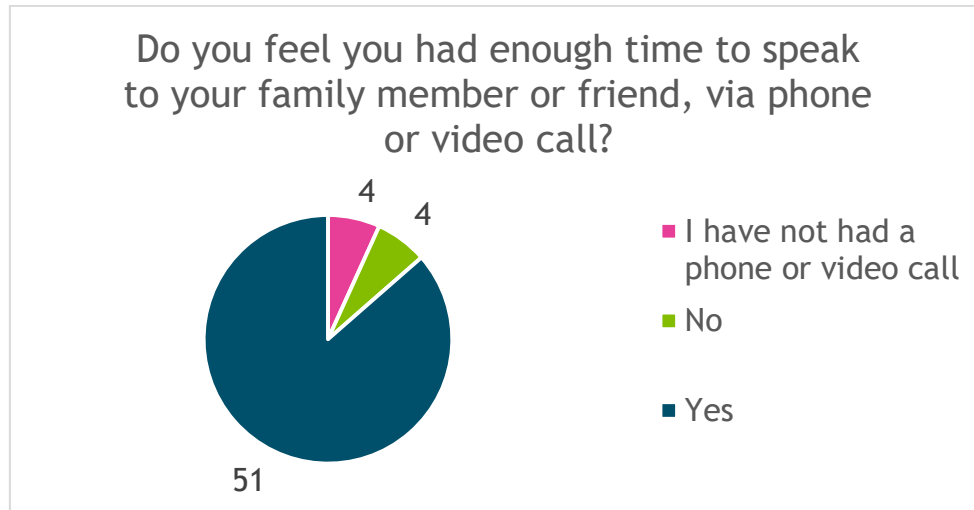
“I receive an update from the nurse on duty twice a week. Plus, regular updates from the manager including relative Zoom meetings.”

“There was a regular email sent out, updating us of any changes.”

“Although communication was very confusing and emails were not very clear due to lack of proof reading before they were sent out.”

“We have been calling mum by FaceTime as the home has a smartphone for family to call on. This is a great help as we cannot see her in person. She can at least see us by phone and we can see her.

Question 6



Of those that had spoken to friends or family members, 93% had enough time to speak to them.



Do you feel you had enough time to speak to your family member or friend, via phone or video call? Please tell us more.

“They make sure they video called us every other day at least, sometimes daily.”

“Video calls did not work well with mum, but the care home kept me up to date using photos and video clips.”

“I could FaceTime my daughter or talk to a member of staff at any time.”

“We try to have a video call every 2 days. The length of time truly depends on our mother’s mood and ***** (care home) have been very helpful in arranging convenient times for us to speak to mum.”

“Video calls have been essential as I haven’t seen my family member in person for 8 months. Our calls have not been restricted by time limits.”

“Again, mostly is more appropriate. Sometimes video calls are not as good as they should be (poor connections/forget to call me). Overall quite good.”

“Our calls can be very long as mum has dementia. The staff have never cut short our calls mostly video. We sometimes talk for an hour or more. This is the same for all my family when talking to mum.”

“Mum has her own iPad and mobile. She can’t always remember how to use them but I can ring the office and use their phone or a member of staff will help mum to connect on her own device.”

“We had a WhatsApp call, which was convenient.”

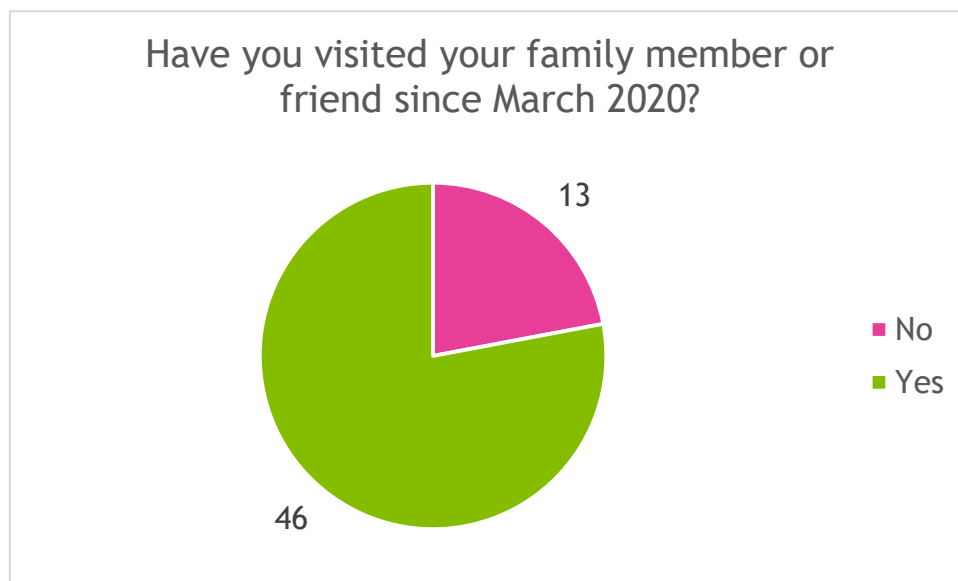
“We make contact via personal tablet, but relies on availability of staff. However, a procedure is in place for scheduled calls on the home’s equipment.”

“We speak to my mother every day (several times) - whenever she wants. The home’s iPad is always available to us, when not in use, for video calls.”

“My mother has a phone in her room. I call her nearly every day.”

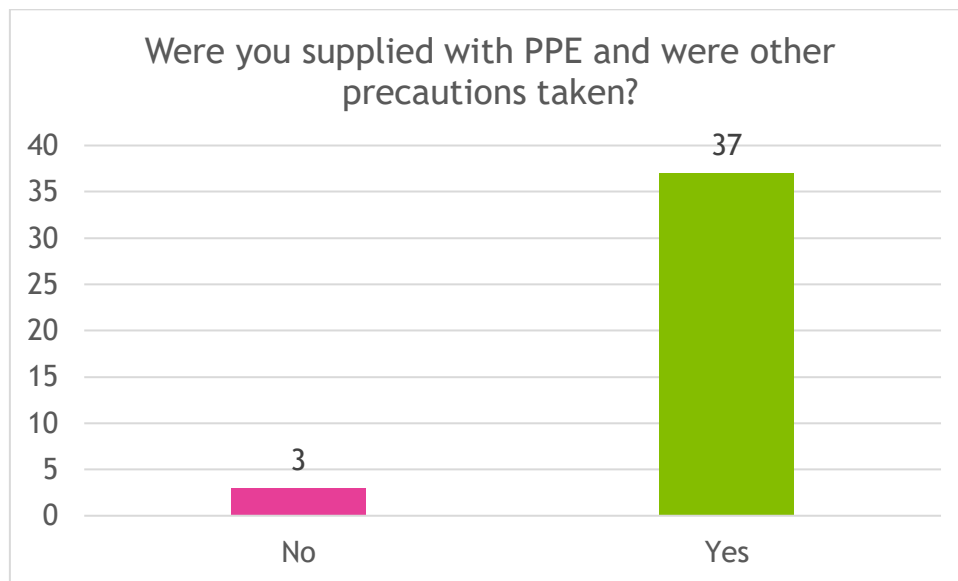
“Was very difficult to set up a time when my relative was awake and in a good place to take the call, so often she was asleep or unresponsive at my allotted time slot, or they forgot to set it up even though I had made an appointment.”

Question 7



Over three quarters of respondents had visited their friend or family member since March 2020.

Question 8



93% had been supplied with PPE.



*Were you supplied with PPE and were other precautions taken?
Please tell us more.*

“Yes. Have to take Covid test. Made to clean hands on arrival. Given aprons, gloves to wear. Ensure we have face masks on or supply them.”

“I provided my own PPE.”

“Yes - PPE available. Masks, aprons, gloves.”

“Wait outside in car to do the swab test. Await results half hour outside. Call in temperature taken and if all ok put on mask, gloves, apron and enter for half hour visit in visitors’ room.”

“It was not necessary to be provided with PPE as we were in a “pod” with a glass screen between us.”

“No PPE was required when I visited but precautions were taken in line with the practice at the time so I have no complaints.”

“It was visiting either outside (not very satisfactory as my mother was one side of a barred gate and I was the other side.), in a lobby area or behind a screen in a conservatory area. The latter two locations were quite acceptable in the circumstances.”

Question 9



What impact has the COVID pandemic had on visits to the care home?

“We visited as a family daily, but since COVID that’s not been possible. It’s now restricted to 2 people. At the beginning, it was once a week. Now twice.”

“The hardest things has been not being able to hug or kiss my daughter or take her back to my house.”

“Stopping all visits from family/friends for such a long time would have had a traumatic effect on many residents. Especially if they did not understand the concept of COVID. They would have thought that all their family and friends had deserted them.”

“Visiting has now become quite disruptive due to the lockdown and outbreaks. As I live in another county, when we have lockdown, I am unable to visit. Before all this, I used to visit every week without an appointment. Now I have to have an appointment to visit as it is in the pod. My brother is the nominated person to visit inside as he lives very close to the care home. I hope and pray we will be able to visit inside one day soon and be able to hold her hand and give her a cuddle. These are the things that are hard to accept.”

“A huge impact on our family as unable to visit. We feel that our Mum’s dementia has deteriorated due to long spells without visits.”

“Obviously not allowed to visit when there was a COVID outbreak. Garden visits, initially followed by pod visits and now safe indoor visits once a week with a COVID swab prior to visit.”

“We had video calls.” “Stopped.” “All visits stopped until w/c 8th March 2021”

“I used to visit my mother monthly. I have seen her once in the last year. I live 160 miles away, I should add.”

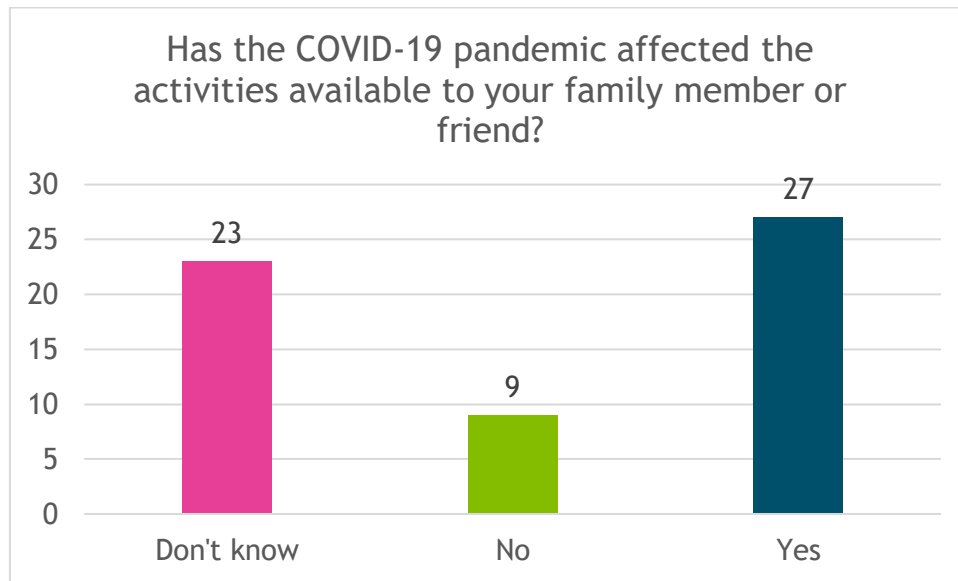
“I am visiting less frequently or not at all.”

“It is difficult to make proper contact with my friend because she is quite introverted and it would help to be able to sit beside her and talk about photos etc. It is difficult to make good contact with someone so introverted with a screen in between.”

“Drastic reduction of visits and access without appointments has been very upsetting.”

“Very few visits and my relative has found it very hard to understand why I had to keep my mask on as it made it hard for her to hear what I was saying. Also she couldn’t understand why I couldn’t hold her hand. We have seen her withdraw so much into her own world since our visits stopped that she now has very little connection to the real world. For a long period of time now she has been telling everyone that I have died.”

Question 10



Over a third of respondents didn't know if the activities at the care home had been affected. For those that were aware, **three quarters** stated that activities had been affected for their family member or friend.

Question 11



How have the activities been affected (and have alternatives been made available)?

“No craft, music or pet therapy. Not sure if alternatives provided by staff, but limited access to care home has kept everyone safe.”

“The staff have managed to keep all their clients entertained, safe and happy. Even when lots of activities have been closed.”

“I have not been able to take the resident out in my care or to visit other relative.”

“No outings have been possible. Entertainers have not been allowed into the home but staff make some entertainment.”

“Confined to room due to positive COVID test and isolation following hospital stay.”

“During the outbreak, residents could not go to the lounge for group activities but they did more 1-1 time.”

“There are fewer social activities available, but this is of little concern to my mother, who likes to read, or do puzzles by herself. The staff keep her company and are like a family to her.”

“They have tried their best to keep activities going but obviously outside volunteers and groups could not come in - though in some cases the care home then arranged for the groups to make videos to share.”

“There have been fewer activities and far fewer visiting entertainers, helpers etc.”

Question 12



Do you have any other comments about being a friend or family member of a resident of this care home during the COVID-19 pandemic?

“I was kept fully in the picture throughout. The staff were wonderful, and I was delighted to hear that all have been vaccinated.”

“We believe that all the staff gave us the most support they could to look after our family member and as much opportunity within the strict rules to visit when allowed using the booking slot system to make it fair for all residents. We have also been able to visit from the safety of the car park on the phone looking out of their window so they can at least see us.”

“As family are unable to hug or touch my family member, it is comforting to see (in my video calls) how caring and affectionate the staff are to residents.”

“I am very pleased that the care home was kept free of the virus throughout the pandemic.”

“I find ***** care home to be a very friendly home with nothing you ask being any problem to deliver. You can call any time of day and always get someone that will do their best or more to accommodate your request. Mum has been there nearly 3 years and I couldn't be happier with her care.”

“It has been very hard on all the family but of course mostly mum. She really missed regular visits and can't understand why we can't hug and kiss. Her dementia has got worse, though that would probably have happened, but she gets very upset and doesn't normally suffer with depression.”

“It was one of the hardest years of our lives not being able to hold our son who has such challenges that he couldn't understand why his mum and dad had stopped visiting - his emotional wellbeing was always a worry plus for us as a family not being able to bring him home for visits was really tough.”

“I received pictures of activities done. I am happy activities were provided in the room.”

“I do highly appreciate them all. Management, care staff and all support team for the care, support and love in these difficult times. Thank you.”

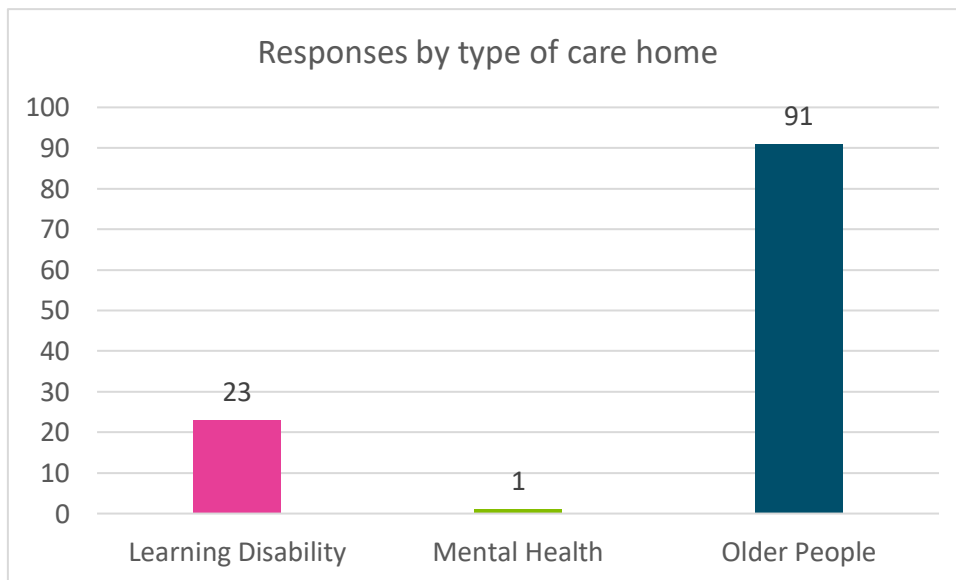
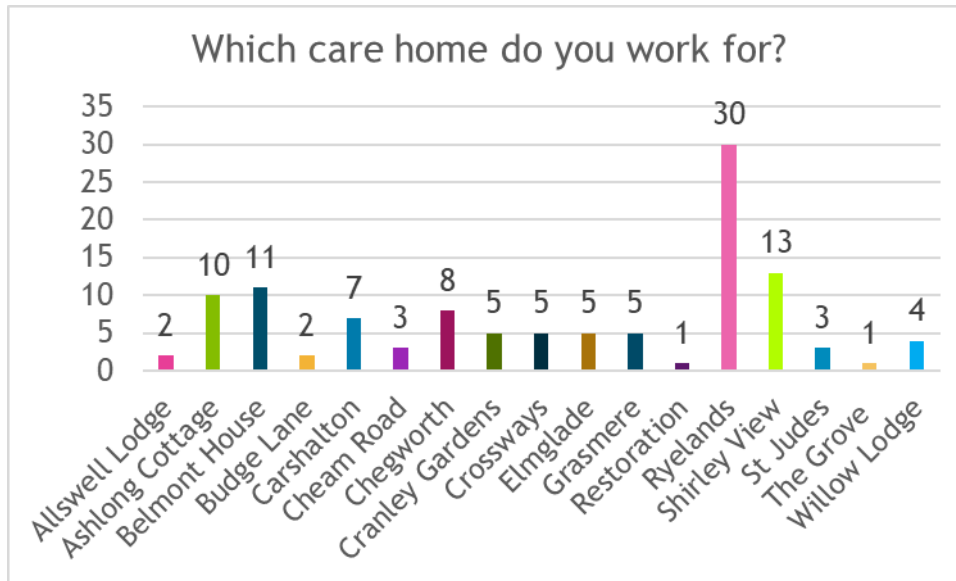
“Overall the care staff and the management have worked extremely hard to try and provide good care and a good quality of life for residents. It's concerning that the care home are having to work very hard to get all staff to be vaccinated but this is no different from many other care homes.”

“Dreadful time that we will never get back as our relative drops out more and more from reality.”

“Better communication for sure. In these days of technology, the home is sadly stuck in a time warp. An upgrade of the phone would be good so we can have multiple people on a FaceTime call. As they have an old phone, only one person can FaceTime. We'd love to have other family members on a call.”

Staff Experience

In total, we received 115 responses.



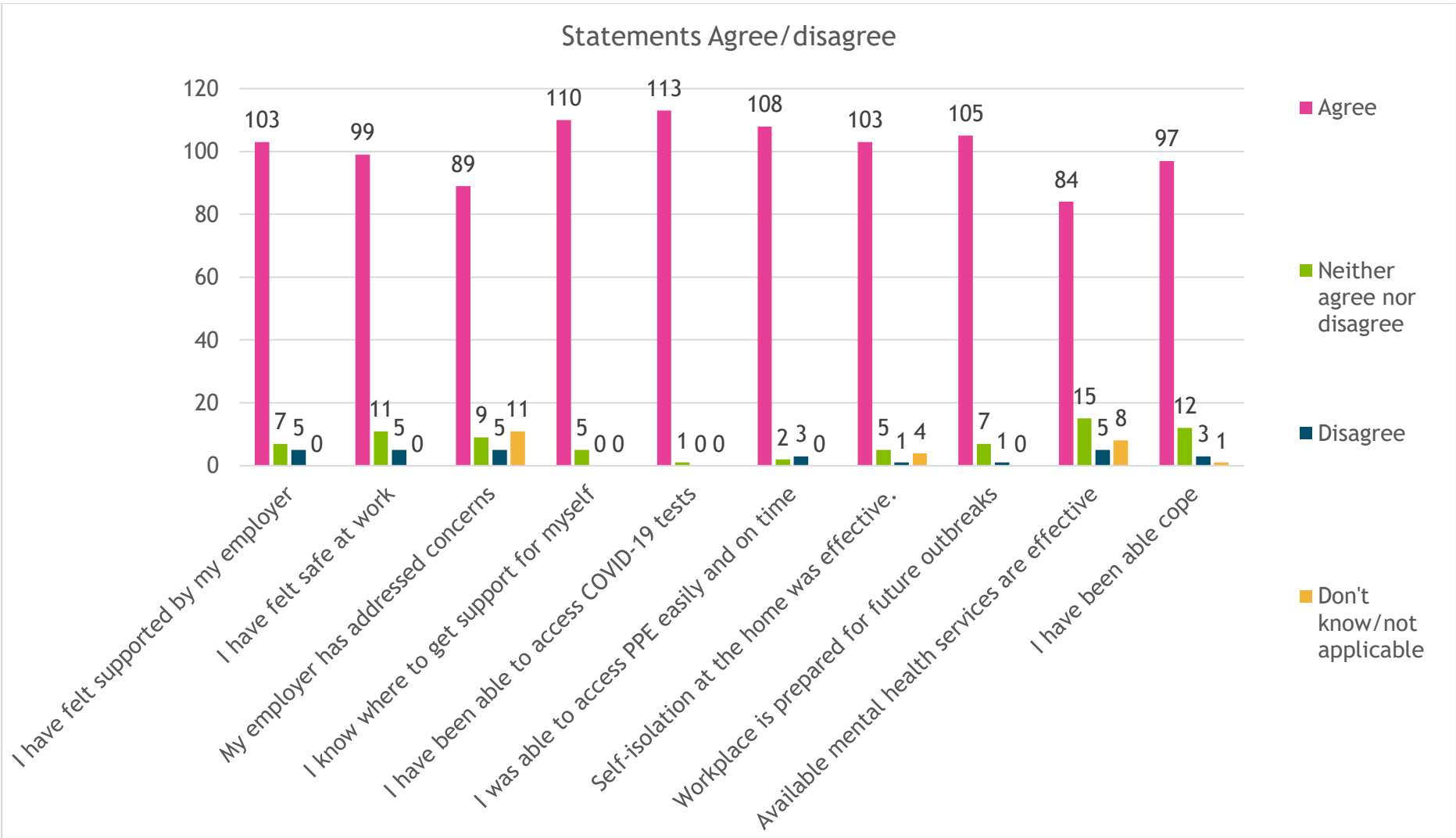
Question 2

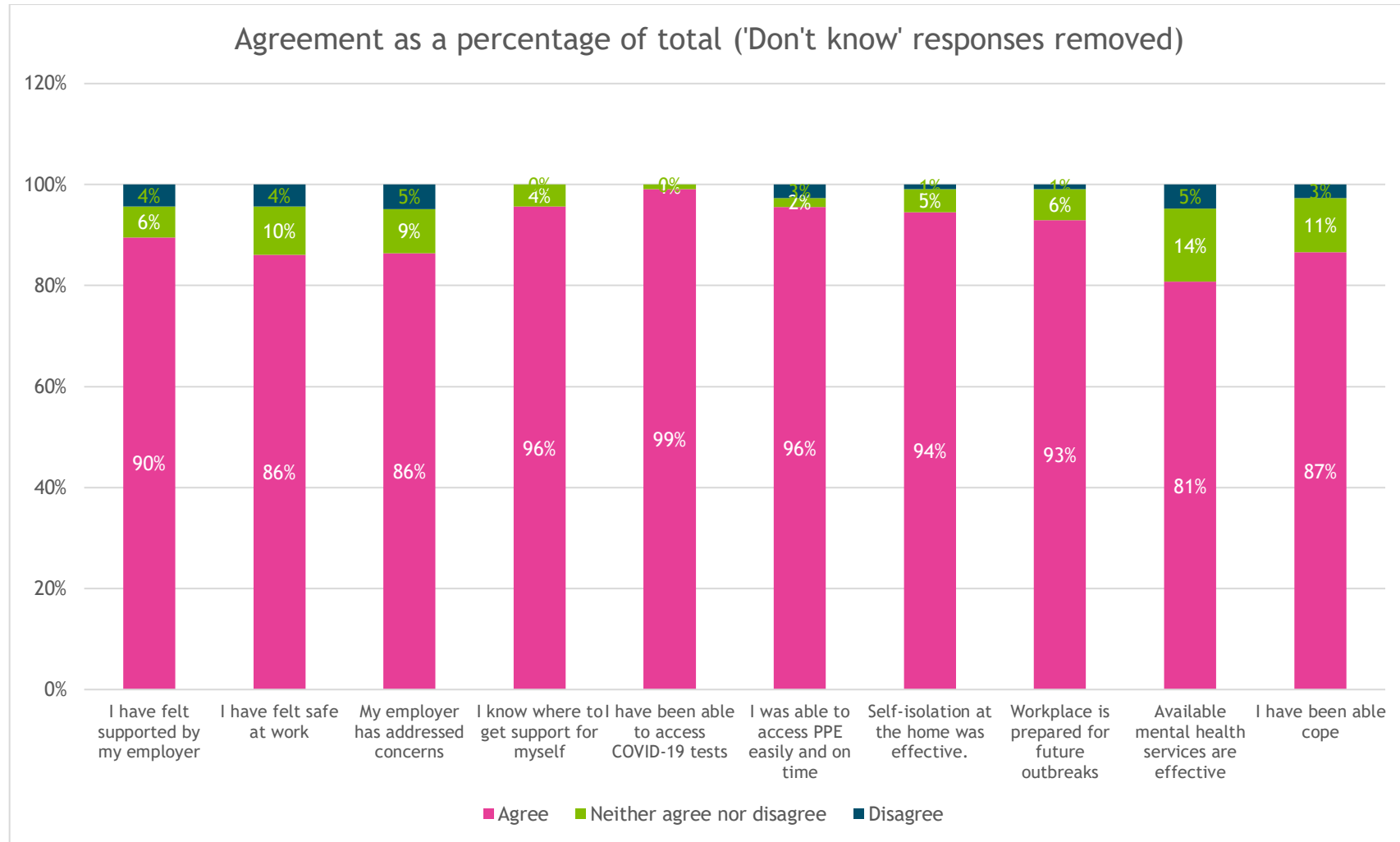
Staff were asked how much they agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. I have felt supported by my employer during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. I have felt safe at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. If I have raised concerns, these have been addressed by my employer.
4. I know where to get support for myself during the coronavirus pandemic.
5. I have been able to access COVID-19 tests when I have needed to.
6. When I needed PPE, I was able to access it easily and on time.
7. I believe the self-isolation process put in place at the home was effective.
8. I am satisfied that my workplace is prepared if there are future outbreaks of coronavirus.
9. I feel that the available mental health and wellbeing services are supporting my needs effectively.
10. I have been able to cope during the coronavirus pandemic.

Responses available were:

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know/Not applicable





Overall, responses were positive with the vast majority agreeing with the statements.

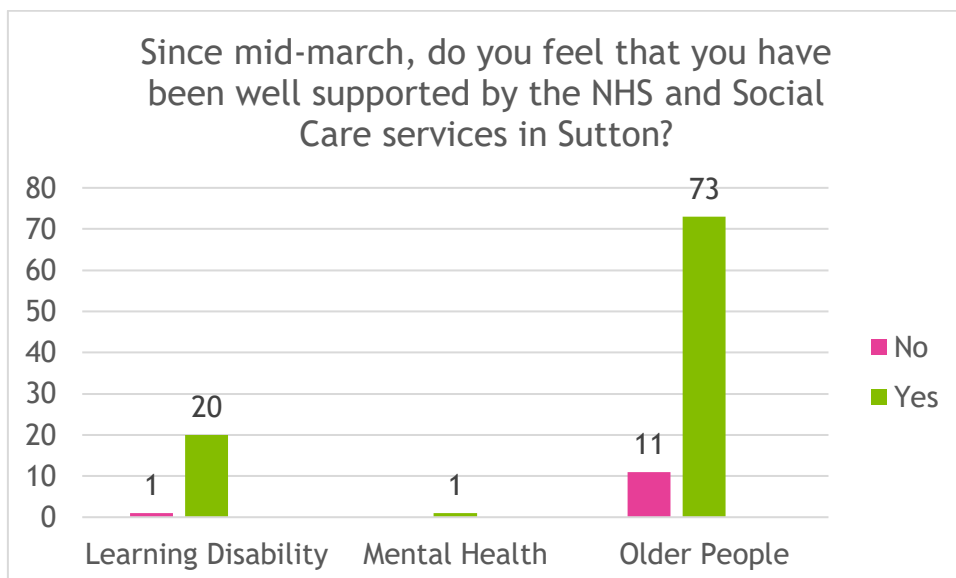
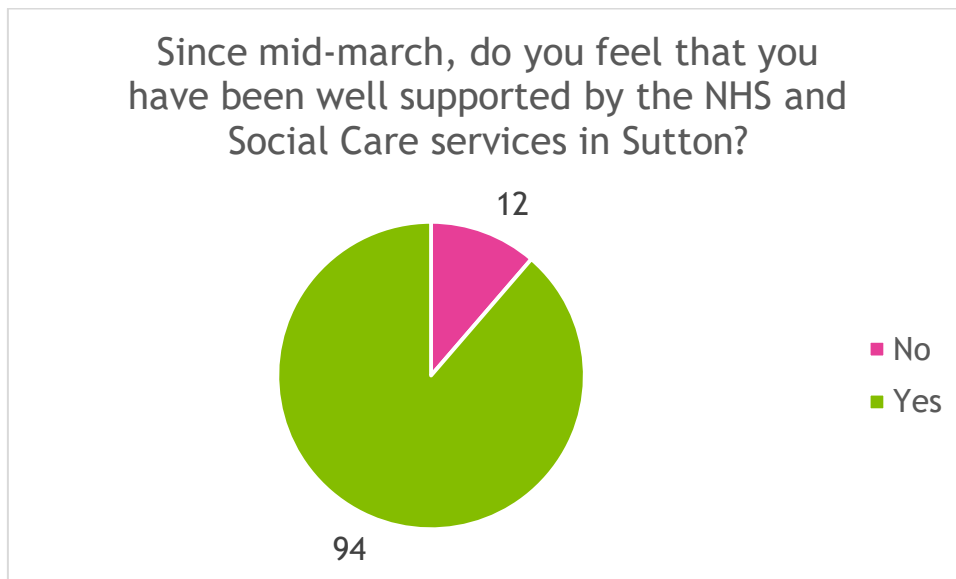
The statements with the **greatest agreement** were:

1. I have been able to access COVID-19 tests when I have needed to.
2. I know where to get support for myself during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. When I needed PPE, I was able to access it easily and on time.

The statements with the **least agreement** were:

1. I feel that the available mental health and wellbeing services are supporting my needs effectively.
2. If I have raised concerns, these have been addressed by my employer.
3. I have felt safe at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question 3



Proportionally, staff in care homes for older people have felt less supported by the NHS and Social Care (though figures are low for learning disability and mental health care homes).



Since mid-March, do you feel that you have been well supported by the NHS and Social Care services in Sutton? Please say why.

“No - don't get COVID-19 positive isolation pay.”

“No - I do not receive services from Sutton.”

“No - not access to basic care.”

“Yes - very early on there was no help for wellbeing of care home staff. When you called the number that was shared it said only for NHS staff and advised to call the Samaritans. It is much better now.”

“Yes - because we have got the vaccine and all support needed has been provided through my employer. For example, PPE, training and advice.”

“Yes - from Social Care Services, we got lots of support during the pandemic. They provided us with PPE protection for all staff. We also got medical support from the NHS.”

“Yes - IPC training. Regular webinar.”

“Yes - the Sutton Care Hub website has been very informative.”

“Yes - vaccination roll-out was brilliant, but access for GP appointments was difficult and could result in serious health issues for patients in the future.”

“Yes - we received full support from NHS and Social Care. They call every single day to support us.”



For future planning, what improvements would you like to see the care home undertake to support you in your work and provide a good service for the service users?

“As staff I need to be sure that when I am not able to work, especially if off sick because of company breaking basic rules, I should be paid and not left without any support.”

“Better plan to support staff both financially and mental well-being. Either isolating, shielding.”

“Enough funding to pay staff when sick from work with virus. Provide a screen for visitors so they can see relatives safely.”

“Good communication before admitting Covid service users in the home under isolation.”

“I feel that care assistants should be furloughed.”

“I think that as the residents’ family will be visiting, and a LFC test will have to be done, the employer should get a designated person to do these tests.”

“I would like to see more family visiting to our service users. During the pandemic, they really felt left alone by their family. It will be a really great support for them if they can see their dearest ones.”

“In the future, I would like to have my full wages to be paid during my isolation period.”

“Mental health assistance.”

“More hard working staff.”

“More time on rota for training. Need more equipment for manual handling.”

“Openness about residents and staff affected. Psychological support to those affected.”

“Provide more PPE.”

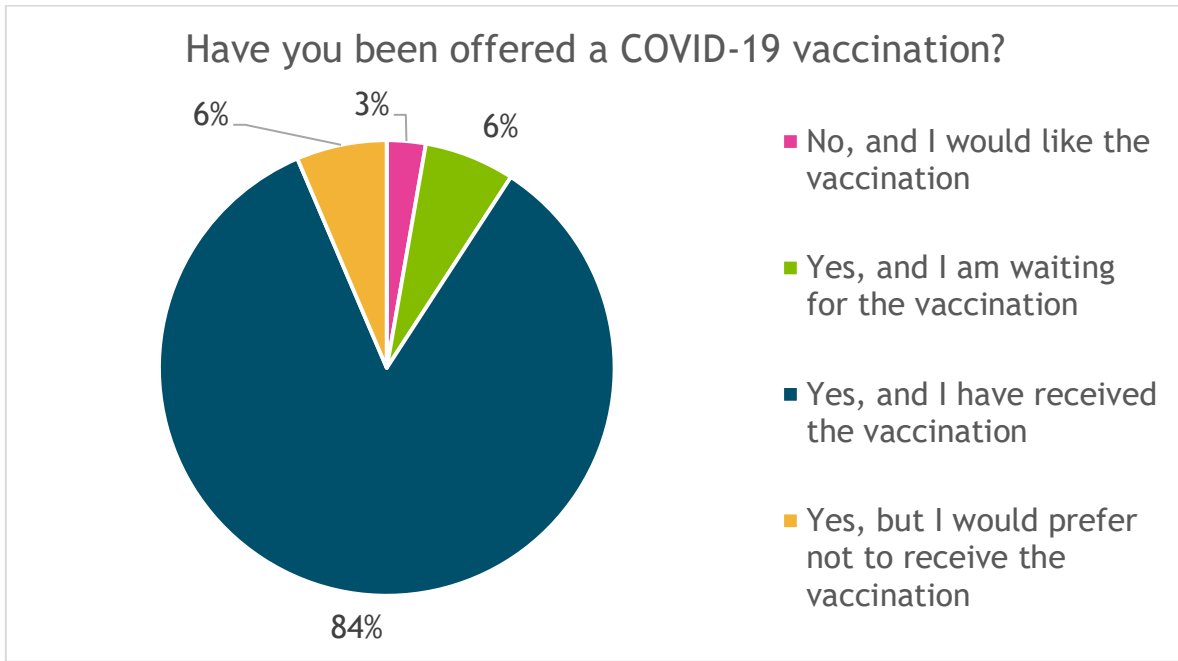
“Provide some sort of indoor activities. This has been difficult for both staff and clients.”

“Provide transport for staff.”

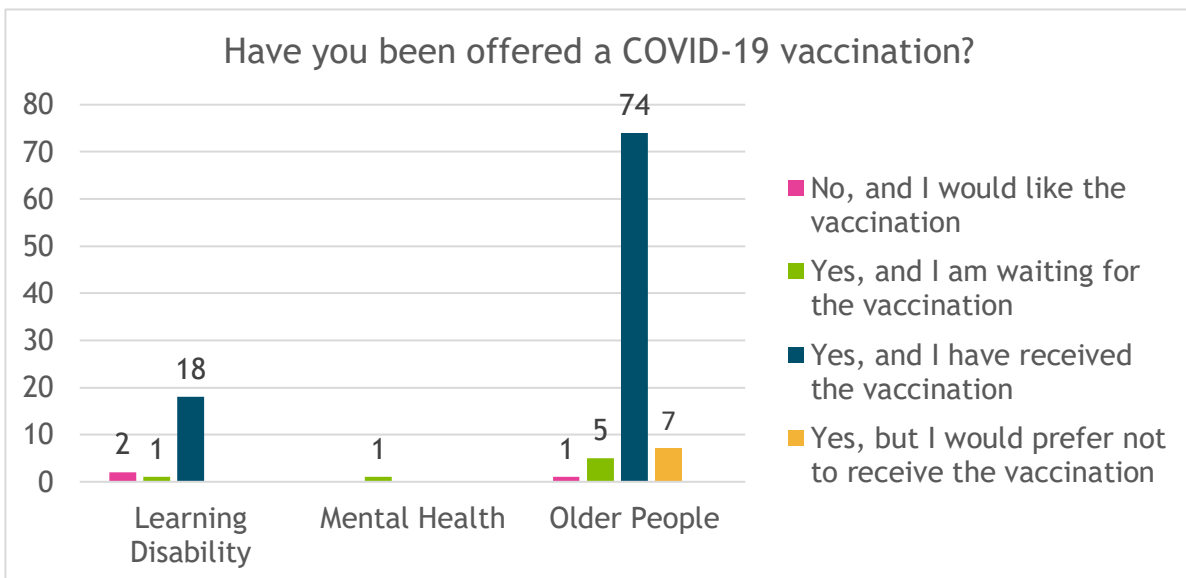
“To provide additional staff member to complete tasks associated with COVID-19. At present, all tasks are allocated to regular staff members on top of their duties.”

“Well plan about future pandemics.”

Question 5



Most staff have already received a vaccination. 6% are happy to have one but are waiting and a further 6% have been offered a vaccination but would prefer not to receive one. 3% have not been offered a vaccination but would like one.



Staff at care homes for older people seem to be most reticent to receive the vaccination (though response numbers for learning disability and mental health care homes are lower).

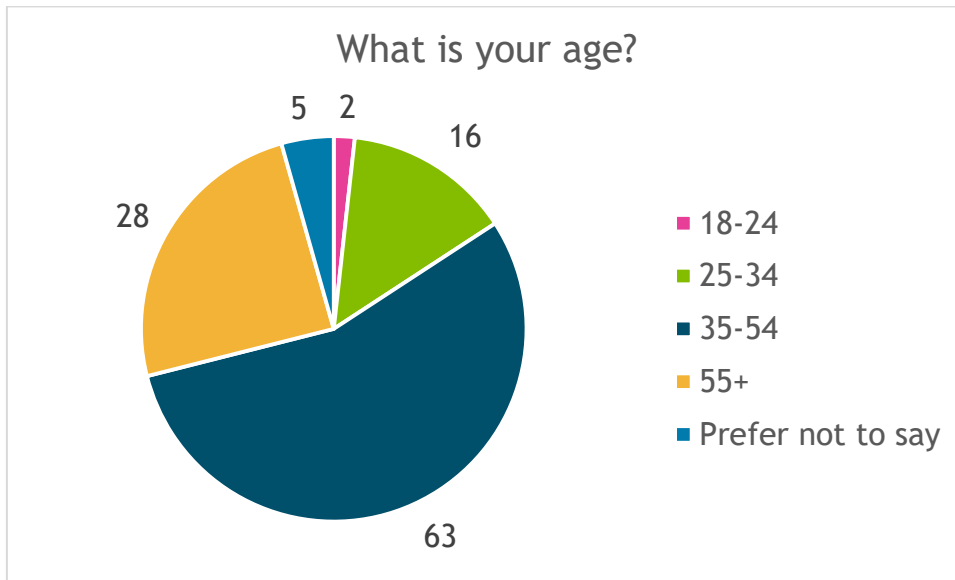


Staff could choose 'Other' for Question 5 and add their own response. These are some of the responses received:

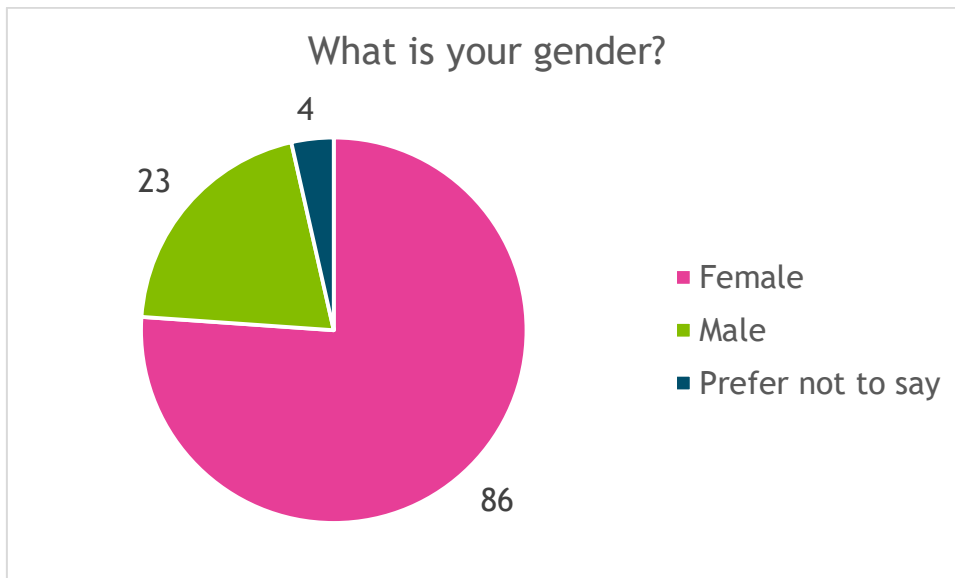
"I am still undecided"

"I'm pregnant so not allowed."

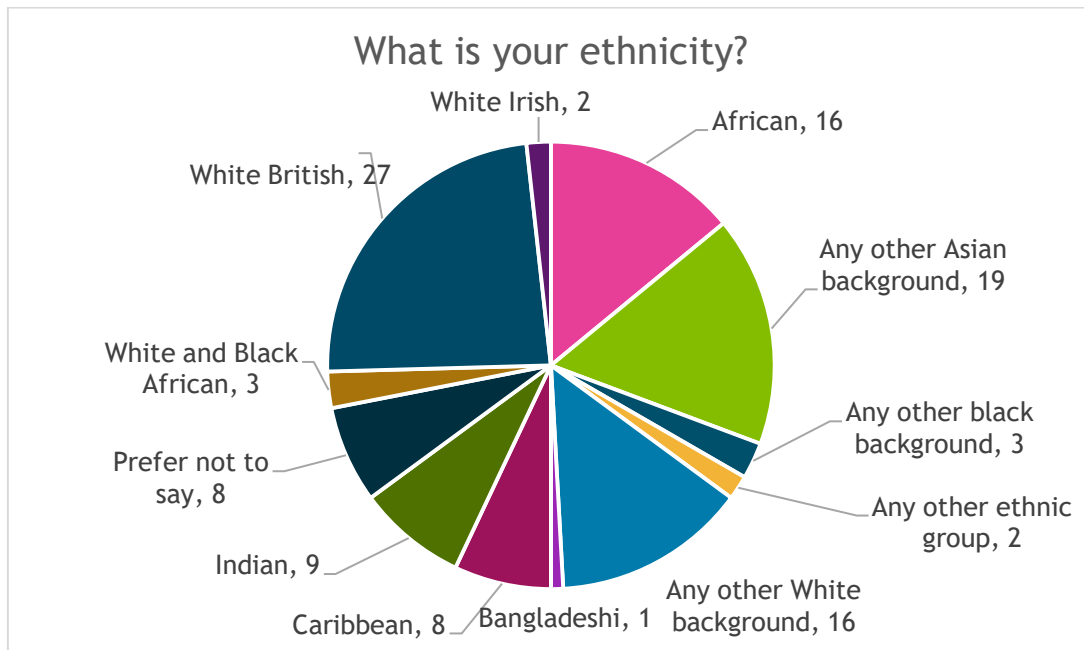
Question 6



Question 7



Question 8



Key Findings - Residents

1. Respondents ratings of their care changed very little when comparing before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The vast majority of respondent's comments about their experience during the pandemic are very positive.
3. Most respondents acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on their lives especially in relation to visits.
4. Of those respondents that needed access to care, 98% were able to access it.
5. Of those respondents who needed emotional or mental health support, 85% were offered it.
6. 92% of respondents had been given the opportunity to speak to friends and family via phone or video call.
7. 38% of respondents had not been visited by friends and family in the last few months.
8. 5% of respondents felt that arrangements to receive the vaccine were not well-managed
9. 5% of respondents felt that they had not been able to keep up-to-date with information and advice about COVID-19.

Key Findings - Learning Disability Residents

1. All respondents felt safe in their home.
2. Approximately half of respondents had not been able to see friends and family.
3. 81% of respondents stated that visits had been different.
4. All respondents stated that they had been happy with their activities.

Key Findings - Friends and Family

1. 97% of respondents felt their family member/friend has been safe.
2. Comments regarding the safety question were overwhelmingly positive.
3. Respondents ratings of their care changed very little when comparing before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. 97% of friends and family were kept informed about changes that affected their friends or family member.
5. Examples of communications were; emails, bulletins, newsletters, Zoom meetings with staff or managers.
6. 93% of respondents who had spoken their friend or family member stated that they were given enough time.
7. Video calls were most commonly quoted as the method of communication in the comments.
8. Over three quarters of respondents had visited their friend or family member since March 2020.
9. 93% were supplied with PPE and comments stated that some visitors had brought their own.
10. Comments showed the pandemic has had considerable impact on visits to care homes with examples of garden visits, lack of physical contact, restrictions on the number of visitors, booking appointments, PPE etc.
11. Three quarters of respondents stated that activities had been affected by COVID-19.
12. A large majority of general comments from friends and family were positive.

Key Findings - Staff

Staff were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with 10 different statements concerning their experience of working during the pandemic.

1. The statements with the **greatest agreement** were:
 - a. I have been able to access COVID-19 tests when I have needed to.
 - b. I know where to get support for myself during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - c. When I needed PPE, I was able to access it easily and on time.
2. The statements with the **least agreement** were:
 - a. I feel that the available mental health and wellbeing services are supporting my needs effectively.
 - b. If I have raised concerns, these have been addressed by my employer.
 - c. I have felt safe at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. 89% stated they were well-supported by the NHS and Social Care in Sutton.
4. Most the 11% that stated they were not well supported worked for care homes for older people.
5. 6% of staff have been offered the vaccine but do not want to receive it.
6. 3% of staff have not been offered the vaccine but want to receive it.

Recommendations

Recommendations will be developed using the key findings above. They will be created in consultation with key stakeholders including;

- Sutton Council Commissioners and staff
- Relevant local NHS staff
- Local care home managers and staff
- Care home residents and their friends and family
- Relevant voluntary and community groups

Following agreement of this report at Sutton Council's Bed-based Board, this report will be circulated widely in order that the intelligence gathered can influence decision-makers with a view to make improvements.

Thank you

Many thanks to Sutton Council for commissioning this work.

We would like to thank all the care home staff, residents and their families who have taken the time to complete our surveys. Without this support this report would not have been possible.

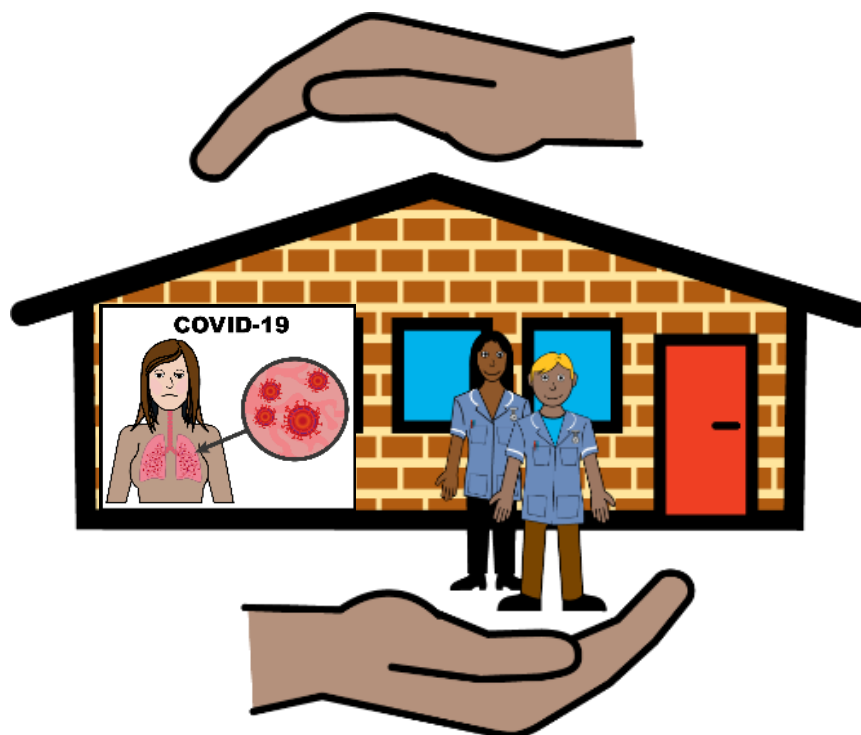
We must also give full credit to Healthwatch Croydon who shared the surveys and methodology that we have used for this work.

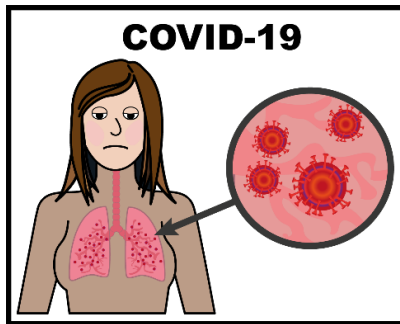
Gemma Thatcher (Healthwatch Sutton, Communications, Engagement and Projects Officer) who put together the 'Easyread' report (Appendix A) of the learning disability responses also deserves special thanks.

Appendix A - Easy Read Report

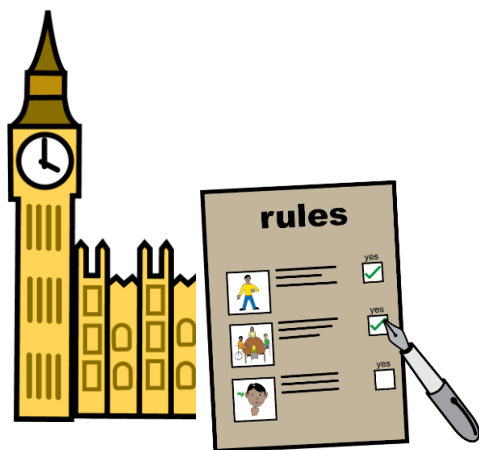


What people told us about care homes in COVID-19

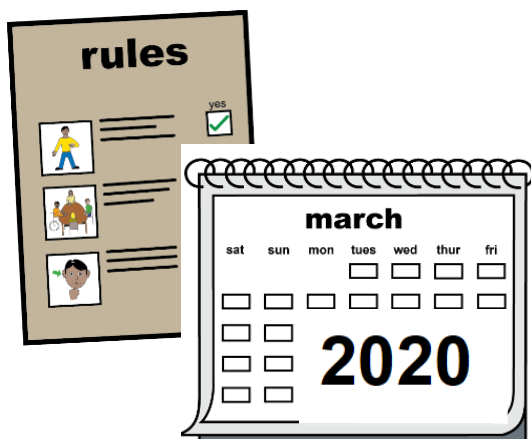




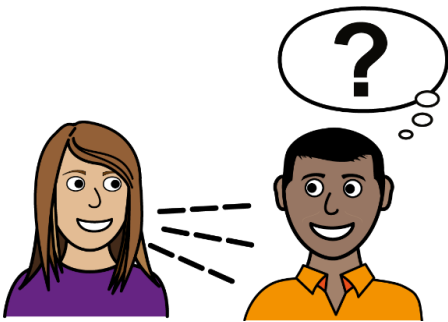
COVID-19 is a **new illness**. It is also called coronavirus. It affects your lungs and breathing. It can make some people very ill.



The Government made some rules to keep everyone safe.



The rules started in **March 2020**.

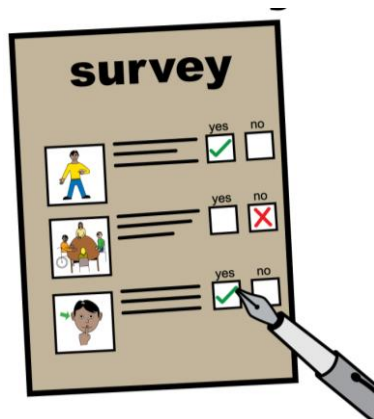


We asked people what life has been like in their care home since March 2020.

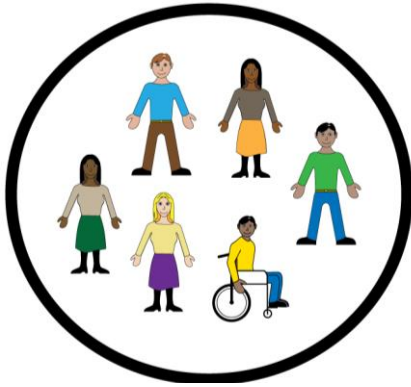


This report tells you what people told us.

How people told us what they thought



We wrote some questions to find out how people felt about their care home.



25 people answered our questions.



Thank you to everyone who answered our questions.

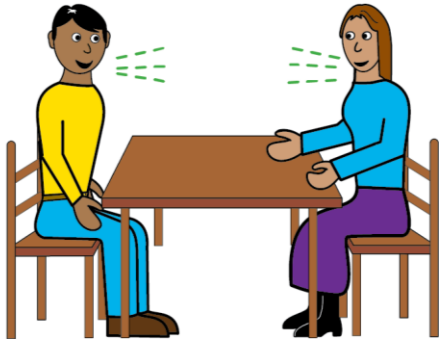
What people told us about their care homes



Everyone said that they felt safe in their home.



Some people said they did not see their family and friends.



Some people said they did see their family and friends.

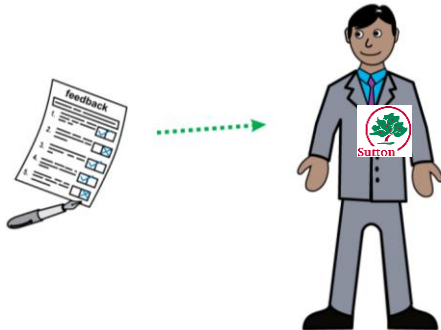


Lots of people said that it had been different when seeing their family and friends.



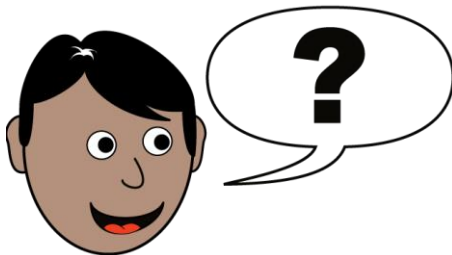
Everyone said they were **happy** with the activities they have been able to do.

What we will do now



We will tell the care homes and Sutton Council what you told us so they know what they are doing well.

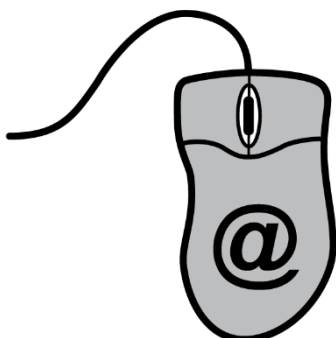
How to contact us



If you have a question, contact Healthwatch Sutton.



Phone: **020 8641 9540**



Email:
info@healthwatchsutton.org.uk

